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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [CO](#)  
SUBJECT: URIBE HARDENS LINE ON HUMANITARIAN ACCORD TALKS  
WITH FARC

REF: BOGOTA 438

Classified By: Political Counselor John Creamer  
Reasons 1.4 (b and d)

#### SUMMARY

1. (C) President Uribe ruled out talks with the FARC on a humanitarian exchange of FARC-held hostages for FARC members in Colombian jails, saying the FARC must unilaterally free its hostages. He also ordered the military to put "permanent pressure" on the FARC through "humanitarian encirclements" of FARC units with hostages. The Catholic Church urged the GOC to keep avenues for dialogue open, and reiterated its offer to facilitate peace talks with the group. The "Colombians for Peace" group said it would ignore Uribe's statements, and would send new letters to the FARC and ELN to promote a humanitarian accord. End summary.

#### URIBE ORDERS "PERMANENT PRESSURE" AGAINST FARC

2. (U) President Alvaro Uribe told the media February 13 that he would not negotiate a "humanitarian accord" with the FARC, and publicly ordered GOC security services to increase military pressure on the group to secure the hostages' freedom. Uribe said he would "only accept the unilateral liberation of hostages by the FARC." Uribe said his hard line was justified by the FARC's continued attacks against innocent civilians. He also announced that he had instructed the military and Police to implement "humanitarian encirclements" to put "permanent pressure" on the FARC until the group liberates those being held. Uribe also said FARC members "Simon Trinidad" and "Sonia" had been convicted in the United States on drug charges, not insurgency, and should not be part of any humanitarian exchange.

#### CHURCH AND CORDOBA SEARCH FOR OPENINGS

3. (C) The Catholic Church and members of Colombians for Peace urged the GOC to remain open to humanitarian exchange and peace talks. Monsignor Ruben Salazar, speaking as head of the Episcopal Conference, urged Uribe to reconsider his position and "not to close the avenues for dialogue." Salazar said the Church remains ready to facilitate talks with the FARC and create confidence building measures between the GOC and FARC. Catholic priest Dario Echeverri told us that in a February 12 meeting with Colombia's Bishops, Uribe repeated his authorization for the Church to continue its outreach to the FARC. Echeverri said he was continuing his

efforts to contact FARC Secretariat members Pablo Catatumbo and Alfonso Cano through different channels.

¶4. (C) Senator Piedad Cordoba and Colombians for Peace member and victim's rights activist Ivan Cepeda said Uribe's hard line stance would increase the danger to hostages. Still, Cepeda said the group was determined to ignore Uribe's "insults"--despite fact they could make the group a target of right-wing violence--and would work on follow-up letters to the FARC and the ELN. The group plans to stay focused on kidnappings, and will not address other issues such as the FARC's admitted massacre of indigenous persons in Narino (reftel). Father Echeverri told us that a source close to the FARC reported that the draft of the initial letter from Colombians for Peace to the FARC was actually written by the terrorist group. He said FARC leader Alfonso Cano has also ordered the FARC to provide all possible political support to Cordoba for her peace initiative.  
BROWNFIELD